Qualitative Research in Educational Sciences
Volume 2, Issue 1, Winter 2026, Pages 9-33
https://doi.org/10.71839/QRES.2026.1212111

Extended Abstract

# Identifying Challenges and Opportunities in the Application of Novel Educational Technologies to Facilitate the Learning of Jurisprudential and Legal Concepts: A Qualitative Study

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## Introduction

Novel educational technologies are increasingly transforming the landscape of higher education, and traditional fields such as Fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence) and Law are no exception. Given the inherently abstract nature of Fiqh and legal concepts, which often pose challenges for traditional teaching methods, significant advancements in technologies like Virtual Reality (VR), Augmented Reality (AR), simulations, and interactive platforms offer unprecedented potential to facilitate and deepen learning (Pistone & Binford, 2015).

The significance of this research is multifaceted. Firstly, enhancing the quality of Fiqh and legal education contributes to training more competent professionals for the legal and judicial system. Secondly, the new generation of students, who have grown up with technology (the digital native generation), expect digital tools to be an integral part of their learning process (Župan, 2023); a failure to meet these expectations can reduce their motivation. Thirdly, these technologies can create simulated learning environments and visualize abstract concepts, bridging existing gaps in traditional education.

Received: 2025/07/16 Accepted: 2025/09/03

**Citation** Rahimi Vaskasi, H., & Rezaeirad, M. (2026). Identifying Challenges and Opportunities in the Application of Novel Educational Technologies to Facilitate Learning of Jurisprudential and Legal Concepts: A Qualitative Study. *Qualitative Research in Educational Sciences, 2*(1), 9–33. https://doi.org/10.71839/QRES.2026.1212111

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https://doi.org/10.71839/QRES.2026.1212111

Numerous studies, both internationally and domestically, have explored the application of technology in education. For instance, research indicates that the use of new communication technologies has a greater impact on science learning and increases student participation (Allahkarami & Mohammadi, 2024). Educational technology models can also improve learning, with virtual classrooms, 3D printing, and virtual reality showing high effectiveness (Rezaei et al., 2022). In the legal education domain, recent studies emphasize the role of novel technologies (Felimon, 2023).

However, there is a significant research gap concerning the focused and in-depth application of novel technologies, particularly in Fiqh and legal education within the Iranian cultural and linguistic context. Most existing studies in this area either address technology in education generally or concentrate on fields other than Fiqh and law. This lack of specific focus highlights the need for comprehensive research that examines both the potentials and obstacles from the perspective of local stakeholders. Therefore, this study aims to answer the central question: How can novel educational technologies be utilized to facilitate and deepen the learning of Fiqh and legal concepts in higher education, and what opportunities, challenges, and solutions exist in this path?

## Methodology

This study adopted a qualitative approach, employing thematic analysis for data exploration and interpretation. The research population comprised 18 experts and scholars in Fiqh and legal education, as well as educational technology specialists, including university and seminary professors in Fiqh and Law, selected through purposive and snowball sampling until theoretical saturation of the data was achieved. The primary data collection instrument was in-depth, semi-structured interviews, all of which were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim. The data analysis process was conducted step-by-step, concurrently with data collection, following the thematic analysis approach by Braun and Clarke (2006). Maxqda software was used to generate initial descriptive and open codes, which were then categorized and combined to form potential themes, subsequently refined and defined.

## Findings

The in-depth qualitative analysis of interview data revealed that the application of novel technologies in Fiqh and legal education encompasses three main dimensions: potentials and opportunities, challenges and obstacles, and solutions and recommendations. Among the opportunities, we identified: deepening and materializing the understanding of complex concepts through visualization (e.g., VR/AR) and simulation of real-world scenarios; increasing accessibility and

personalized learning by removing temporal and spatial constraints and providing adaptive content; and enhancing motivation and active participation by making content engaging and facilitating collaboration.

However, significant challenges were also identified. These obstacles include: infrastructural and financial limitations (e.g., lack of stable internet, insufficient equipment, and inadequate budget); cultural resistance and lack of competencies (including resistance from traditional faculty and a shortage of digital skills among users and specialists); and content-related and intrinsic challenges (such as the difficulty of localizing and producing accurate and specialized Fiqh and legal content, along with ethical and legal concerns related to data privacy and security).

To overcome these challenges, several solutions were proposed. These include: investment in and development of infrastructure (allocating sufficient budget and upgrading national and regional communication infrastructures); empowering and culturally sensitizing human resources (providing continuous and practical training for faculty and changing general attitudes towards technology); and developing localized content and fostering interdisciplinary collaborations (establishing specialized interdisciplinary teams and formulating ethical and legal standards and frameworks).

## Conclusion

This research demonstrates that novel educational technologies hold substantial potential for facilitating and deepening the learning of Fiqh and legal concepts, particularly through visualization, simulation, and increased accessibility and motivation (Han, 2025). However, their successful implementation faces significant challenges such as infrastructural limitations, cultural resistance from faculty, and difficulties related to producing accurate and specialized content (Felimon, 2023). Fully realizing the potential of these technologies necessitates comprehensive planning to address these multifaceted infrastructural, human, and content-related obstacles.

Based on these findings, it is recommended that:

- Educational institutions invest significantly in developing IT infrastructure and continuous empowerment programs for faculty.
- The development of localized and specialized educational content for Fiqh and legal concepts, involving interdisciplinary teams, is crucial.
- Future research could focus on quantitatively evaluating the effectiveness of specific technologies (e.g., VR/AR) on student learning outcomes, conducting comparative studies on their application across different legal and Fiqh systems, and developing indigenous models for technology integration in Fiqh and legal education, considering Iran's specific cultural and ethical dimensions.

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